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THE OBSERVER

BRIEFLY

RIFT DENIED Buckingham Palace last night denied a newspaper report that the Queen and Mrs Thatcher were in conflict over what was described as the Prime Minister's 'uncaring, confrontational and socially divisive approach.'

NUCLEAR BLAME The Soviet politburo admitted that the Chernobyl nuclear accident in April was caused by 'gross breaches of regulation'.

TEBBIT TAUNT Tory Party chairman Norman Tebbit was dubbed the 'Gobbels' of his party by the Liberal leader David Steel.

BUS AMBUSHED Four people, including a doctor, died when gunmen in Beirut sprayed a hospital bus with machine-gun fire.

STRANGLER FEAR Pensioners in South London were warned to be on their guard after fears that the 'Stockwell Strangler' had claimed a fifth victim.

PEACE BID King Hussein of Jordan flew to Baghdad in an attempt to achieve a reconciliation between Syria and Iraq.

CHILD SAVAGED Natasha Ockenden, 10, was in a hospital plastic surgery unit last night after being savaged by a dog while playing near her home in Surrey.

DRUNK CREW The pilot, co-pilot and engineer of a Polish aircraft were sent to jail for being drunk before a flight.

STUDENT SERVICE This summer's A-level candidates and their parents, anxiously awaiting results, can count on help and advice from the Observer Student Service, launched today on page 44.

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Stalker : Police chiefs on the line

EXCLUSIVE

by DAVID LEIGH, PAUL LASHMAR and JONATHAN FOSTER

THE PERSONAL future of two chief constables is in jeopardy if discoveries made in Ireland by suspended investigator John Stalker are correct and if Mr Stalker is exonerated from 'disciplinary' allegations in Manchester next month.

An *Observer* inquiry has found new evidence which concerns both Sir John Hermon, Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, whose force Mr Stalker was investigating, and Mr James Anderton, the Greater Manchester Chief Constable who suddenly removed Mr Stalker, his own deputy, from duty last month, accusing him of possible disciplinary infringements in his private life.

As far as Sir John Hermon is concerned, we have found :

■ Mr Stalker carried out independent forensic tests in Ireland which proved RUC evidence was false in the controversial cases where they had shot and killed suspects.

■ In one case, that of an innocent 17-year-old boy, Michael Tighe, Mr Stalker's team concluded that an ambush set up by an *agent provocateur* led to the 'cold-blooded murder' of the wrong man.

■ Mr Stalker planned to interview both the chief constable himself and his deputy, Mr Michael McAtamney, under caution.

■ Mr Stalker's team concluded that key MI5 surveillance tapes which Sir John Hermon repeatedly refused to release, had been 'wiped,' by unknown persons.

■ Most embarrassing for Sir John, Mr Stalker intended to recommend that the RUC was badly officered throughout, and needed sweeping reforms.

But our discoveries about the conduct of Mr Anderton's force are equally startling.

Mr Stalker's own lieutenant on the Irish inquiry, Det-Supt John Simons, returned to Manchester and organised a fraud inquiry into Mr Stalker's friend, Mr Kevin Taylor, behind Mr Stalker's back, at the height of the RUC controversy.

The relationship between Mr Taylor and Mr Stalker was previously known to senior RUC officers, who the Stalker team accuse of persistent obstruction.

The Taylor allegations about which an inquiry was initially mounted were identical to those collected by Manchester Tory activists who disapproved of Mr Taylor's rise in the city Conservative Association.

Mr Taylor was later accused by police, without evidence to charge him, of a £240,000 fraud conspiracy against the Co-operative Bank.

Photographs of Mr Taylor and Mr Stalker together were then obtained in a raid headed by the local Drugs Intelligence Unit, in co-operation between Det-Supt Simons and his close associate, Chief Supt Peter Topping, and passed to Mr Anderton. Mr Taylor is not involved in drugs.

The Chief Constable was aware of the Taylor investigation before the raid took place, but concealed it from his own deputy.

Senior Manchester police sources say Mr Taylor 'will be charged' with criminal offences, although he has never even yet been interviewed.

■ Nosy police chief who refused to give up, page 3.

Westland : Havers hits back

ADAM RAPHAEL ■ Political Editor

THE Attorney-General, Sir Michael Havers, yesterday angrily denied charges that he had colluded with the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Robert Armstrong, in setting up a bogus inquiry into the Westland leak affair in an attempted cover-up.

The Defence Select Committee concludes in its report, to be published on Thursday, that the Government's chief law officer knew that Mr Leon Brittan, the then Industry Secretary, had authorised the leak of a letter from the Solicitor-General, Sir Patrick Mayhew, even before the inquiry was formally set up.

But Sir Michael told me yesterday : 'This is absolutely untrue. I have not yet seen this report but I feel that if the Committee had wanted to make any accusation against me, they should have asked me about it first.'

The allegations against the Attorney-General are so serious that there had been speculation at Westminster that he might be forced to resign. But Government Whips have been reassured by Conservative members of the Select Committee that the criticisms of Sir Michael's conduct are implicit rather than direct. Opposition members, however, describe the reports of the Attorney-General's behaviour as 'a bombshell.'

Sir Michael, who is considering whether to take legal action to clear his name, said he first learnt of Mr Brittan's involvement when Sir Robert sought immunity for the Industry Department's Chief Information Officer, Ms Colette Bowe.

Ms Bowe, who leaked the Solicitor-General's letter to the Defence Secretary, Mr Michael Heseltine, after discussing the issue with the Prime Minister's press secretary, Mr Bernard Ingham, had refused to give evidence to the inquiry until she was assured she would not be prosecuted under the Official Secrets Act.

In the welter of charges and counter-charges that followed the leak, both Mr Heseltine and Mr Brittan were forced to resign.

The Opposition is planning to maximise the Government's discomfort by seeking to prevent the Commons rising for the summer recess if it has had a chance to debate the committee's findings. Ministers are confident of defeating this move, but Labour and Alliance leaders will almost certainly force a debate when the Commons returns in the autumn.

Mrs Thatcher is bound to be seriously embarrassed by the report, which is critical of some of her closest aides in No. 10.

The Prime Minister's own role in the leak remains obscure, as the committee felt unable on the basis of the evidence available to form definite conclusions about the extent of her knowledge. But the report does raise questions about her responsibility for what is seen by the committee as an exceptionally shabby affair.

It notes that on 23 January Mrs Thatcher admitted to the Commons that she had 'authorised' the leaking of the Solicitor-General's letter in explicit terms : 'It was to get that accurate information to the public domain that I gave my consent.' Subsequently, Downing Street officials claimed this was merely a slip of the tongue ' and said that the Prime Minister had not known about the leak in advance.

But it is clear from the report that the Select Committee is not satisfied with this explanation.

Sir Robert's own role is increasingly criticised by the committee, which suggests that he should not have conducted the inquiry into a matter where his own responsibilities are involved.

The only individual who is said to emerge totally unscathed from the report is Sir Patrick Mayhew.

■ Westland Shadow over City, page 25.

FERGIE TAKES HER YOUNG MAN HOME TO THE COUNTRY

DAVID MANSELL

Sarah's Fete : Sarah Ferguson and Prince Andrew taking time off yesterday from their wedding preparations to open the fete at her home village of Dummer, Hants. Sarah won two prizes on a tombola stall and the couple watched a Morris dancing display.

It's punch v. paunch in pre-match weigh-in

by PAUL ROUTLEDGE

IT WAS the best free theatre in London yesterday and there was standing room only in the stalls. On stage at the Odeon Leicester Square, Britain's great hope Frank Bruno was a perfectly proportioned but reticent figure as he weighed in at 16st 3lb 15oz for the world heavyweight championship early yesterday.

The World Boxing Association champion Tim Witherspoon, of Cleveland, Ohio, weighed in at 16st 10lb 10 oz and flexed his much talked-about paunch.

He replied testily to questioners : 'They said I had a big gut but I'm in good shape, no problem about weight.'

There was no pre-bout banter with the contender as Witherspoon arrived with an entourage of heavy, mean-looking men straight out of the pages of Damon Runyon, dolled up in white track-suits with such names as 'Mad Dog' emblazoned on their chests.

The English audience was naturally rooting for Our Man —and the auditorium echoed to the drawn-out cries of 'Broo-No.'

The most they got in return was the raising of the famous 14in fist that the boxing scribes

Bruno : Propaganda win.

in popular prints had predicted would bring the title back to Britain for the first time in 89 years.

To meet the non-negotiable demands of American cable television, the bout took place at Wembley Stadium after midnight, peak viewing time for the folks back home in Ohio.

So it was not surprising that the compere at yesterday's 'main event' (as he lizted to call it) was still urging the punters to buy tickets at up to £100 a throw for 'the biggest promotion of all time,' as the boxing entrepreneurs called it with the customary reserve of the fight game.

Bruno went into the ring as the bookies' favourite. His chance for a crack at the consolidated world title rested on the performance of his great fist.

Certainly the most startling figure at the weigh-in was Witherspoon's impresario-promoter Don King, his white hair standing erect as though one finger was in an electric socket.

The Americans were strong on style and there were occasional exchanges off-stage about rearranging the faces of the British fans who predicted ' Bruno will kill him,' but all delivered in the correct, clipped bravado of the game.

Witherspoon stroked his paunch and struck a few melodramatic poses for the cameras and the fight preliminaries were over. The scribes gave the champ a propaganda win on points.

WEDDING SOUVENIR

NEXT Sunday *The Observer Magazine* will publish a special 16-page souvenir pull-out of the Royal Wedding in full colour, with a report by award-winning feature writer Sue Arnold from inside Westminster Abbey. Order your copy now from your local newsagent. This is your chance to obtain an enduring record of the Wedding of the Year.

India takes Games boycott toll to 22

SHYAM BHATIA in Delhi

INDIA last night became the 22nd Commonwealth country to opt out of the Commonwealth games because of Britain's refusal to back economic sanctions against South Africa.

A delayed announcement from New Delhi last night said : 'Some recent statements of the British Government have led us to believe that it is not prepared to impose even the minimum measure agreed at Nassau.'

Earlier yesterday Bangladesh, Lesotho, Gambia, Barbados and Guyana joined the boycott of the games, due to open on Thursday. Last night they were joined by St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Rajiv Gandhi, the Indian Prime Minister, had waited to hear the views of the frontline African states which met in Harare, Zimbabwe, on Friday. Botswana refused to join the boycott, and the surprisingly mild communiqué issued after the meeting seemed designed to give Mrs Thatcher a chance to reverse the decision by Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe to pull out.

Mrs Thatcher shows no sign of being influenced. Her attitude appears to have hardened in the past 24 hours.

Relations between Mrs Thatcher and the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Sir Sonny Ramphal, seem to have hit a new low. Downing Street suspects that Ramphal was responsible for the rash of reports last week alleging that Queen and the Prime Minister were on a constitutional collision course.

■ Several big names have pulled out of a Commonwealth writers' conference in Edinburgh this weekend in protest at Mrs Thatcher's policy. ■ Record-breaking runner Mr Steve Cram, who has been asked by other athletes to lead the English team in walking out of the Commonwealth Games in protest at Mrs Thatcher's attitude to South Africa, says he will back the move if there is enough support.

■ Unfriendly Games, page 9 ; Sanctions pressure, page 10.

Paperback writer Lennon can't let it be

by PETER WATSON

SAVAGE and funny comments written by John Lennon in the margin of a book about the Beatles throw new light on the stresses and strains within the group.

The comments appear in a 76-page biographical booklet of the Beatles, to be sold at auction this summer. It was published by the company, Apple Corps, in 1971. Lennon wanted the book suppressed because he felt it was biased in favour of Paul McCartney and his wife Linda and against himself and the others.

He annotated nearly every page, correcting errors and adding revealing comments about almost every episode in the Beatles' history.

The book, which is signed 'Lennon 'on the cover, provides conclusive proof that, even in the Sixties, the group was experimenting with drugs. Alongside one photograph of the group, for instance, Lennon has amended a bland caption to read : 'Staged photo pretending to be the fab four : all waiting stoned for it to be over.'

Against another, when they had moustaches, he wrote : 'Paul started this moustache business because he'd split his lip on a " stoned " moped ride —purely functional really.'

The full extent of the intense—and at times bitter—rivalry between John and Paul also comes across vividly in his remarks and comments. In one 1962 picture of McCartney, Lennon drew a huge bubble from his mouth containing the words : 'I'm always perfect.' On another picture of Paul he drew a small Hitler-moustache—and against a chronological note for 12 March 1969, which read : 'Paul McCartney's wedding at Marylebone Registry Office to Linda Eastman,' Lennon crossed out ' wedding' and substituted 'funeral.'

For another entry, dated June 1968, which read : 'Paul to Hollywood,' Lennon added : 'Cuts Yoko and John out of film ! . . .' And for 16 March 1971, which read : 'Paul and Linda in Los Angeles accept Grammy award for Let It Be, best original film score,' he added : 'Just to embarrass us and Spector after he'd " denounced " Phil in L. I. Be.'

Next to an entry for 30 December, which reads : 'Paul McCartney files court suit demanding dissolution of the Beatles and a receiver be appointed,' Lennon added ' What about his [unreadable] songs shit ? '

According to Hilary Kay, the Sotheby's expert in charge of the auction on 28 August, when the book is expected to fetch $10,000-$15,000, Lennon's handwriting throughout the book shows just how upset he was by what he saw as the bias in the book, and especially the short shrift given to Yoko in contrast to Linda.

On one page, in large capitals, he wrote : 'This book is so prejudiced against John, Yoko and slightly against Ringo(y) and Mo and (George) & P(attie) that I want to know who put it together and fire them ! '

He is honest about Yoko. Against an entry for 23 April 1970 which reads : 'John and Yoko to California for extended holiday,' he has crossed out the last two words and substituted ' therapy.'

But he is also tender. Across the last page, showing a picture of the two of them, he wrote : 'The minutes are crumbling away.' More than he knew.